

100 COMMENTARY ON MACAULAY'S
HISTORY

Thomas Wharton, who, in the last Parliament, had represented Buckinghamshire, and who had long been conspicuous both as a libertine and as a Whig, had written a satirical ballad on the administration of Tyrconnel. In this little poem an Irishman congratulates a brother Irishman, in a barbarous jargon, on the approaching triumph of Popery and of the Milesian race. The Protestant heir will be excluded. The Protestant officers will be broken. The Great Charter and the praters who appealed to it will be hanged in one rope. The good Talbot will shower commissions on his countrymen, and will cut the throats of the English. These verses, which were in no respect above the ordinary standard of street poetry, had for burden some gibberish which was said to have been used as a watchword by the insurgents of Ulster in 1641. The verses and the tune caught the fancy of the nation. From one end of England to the other all classes were constantly singing this idle rhyme. It was especially the delight of the English army. More than seventy years after the Revolution, Sterne delineated, with exquisite skill, a veteran who had fought at the Boyne and at Namur. One of the characteristics of the good old soldier is his trick of whistling Lillibullero.

Wharton afterwards boasted that he had sung a King out of three kingdoms. But in truth the success of Lillibullero was the effect, and not the cause, of that excited state of public feeling which produced the Revolution.¹

From similar sources Macaulay illustrates the growth of popular feeling against the policy of James during the three years which intervened between 1685 and 1688 ; he shows for instance how Mary of Modena after being popular as Duchess of York became unpopular when she was queen,² the chorus of jeering ballads which anticipated the birth of the Prince of Wales and predisposed the English nation to regard the royal child as the child of a

¹ III, 1072 (ix). Cf. pp. 1075, 1176. ^a II, 644 (v).